DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 162 677 JC 780 590

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TITLE Zombies or Persons?
PUB DATE [76]
NOTE 21p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Access to Education; Educational Objectives; *Educational Philosophy; Elementary Education; *Futures (of Society); Postsecondary Education; *School Role; Secondary Education; *Social Change

ABSTRACT

In the United States there are two commitments and two trends which shape and eventually may alter traditional educational patterns. The first trend is the mobility of students in terms of school busing, business transfers of their parents, high school foreign exchange programs, and further college-age changes which create a free, peripatetic nature in these future students. The second trend involves the technology which has placed in students' hands ever more efficient means and increased supplies of materials to enable them to teach themselves. The two basic commitments characterizing American education are secular education and mass education. The former has been considered as essential to a free, pluralistic society and the latter encompasses recent trends toward the development of each person to his individual potential. As educational experts are confronted with the myth of value-free eduation, the questions arise of how to rectify problems resulting from purely materialistic teaching and how to delineate more broadly the tasks of education. Citing the literature, this document goes on to present possibilities for education in the future. (ME)

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ZOMBIES OR PERSONS?

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Every country in the world now recognizes that EDUCATION is the key to the FUTURE. But what kind of education? This poses crucial questions. . .answers to which will determine all our tomorrows, or indeed if we have any tomorrows. Thus it is imperative to assess cultural trends and scan the future for clues to improving our educational systems wherever we live.

In the United States there are two commitments and two trends which shape, and eventually may basically alter, traditional educational patterns. It seems possible that other free nations will subscribe to these commitments and be caught up in these trends. Since harmonizing them and making them viable is a challenge the world has never before known, it might prove useful to examine their implications.

In these brief remarks we will focus on the implications for higher education, for it is here that educational psychology/philosophy/methodology take their rise; it is in this arena that leadership is developed for every aspect of the culture. We will examine the trends first as they cast their shadows on the commitments.

Two Trends

Every baby born in the U.S. now has the option of unprecedented educational privileges from pre-school to life-long learning. This could and should presage a new dawn. But let us view the trends as they may affect the educator, the educational situation, and the student.

The first trend is MOBILITY. If children in their early years have not already been moved from one school to another through student-integration laws, the business transfer of their parents, high school foreign exchange programs, or for other reasons, they will inevitably be caught up by college age in the trend of mobility.

With 50% freshman attrition in our institutions of higher education, we are keenly aware that our students are moving from one educational setting to another where the grass is genuinely greener or at

least more alluring. They are now opting to move in and out of the formal educational patterns, with work/study programs, on-the-job training, internships of various kinds, and ever-new innovative teaching situations. Commuting or off-campus living now deprive them of the once-coveted "campus life" with its purported maturing influence on growing persons.

With the need for upgrading professional/vocational skills, with the financial necessity for more and more women to enter the work force, with the thrust on the part of thousands of adults for continuing education, large segments of the adult population move in whatever direction their educational goals can be satisfied.

Thus, students of the future may be seen to be free, peripatetic agents. Mobility seems destined to alter the character of the entire educational experience as traditionally it has been known:

1. Cross-sections of population create new types of learning situations with classroom audiences consisting of those with wide age spans, varieties of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, disparate goals, varying levels of intelligence, motivation, achievement.

2. Educators no longer know who their students are.
3. Conventional educational continuity is shattered.

Questions:

1. How can students now be identified as to their personal academic objectives?
2. How can each student be reached to enhance his/her personal maturing?
3. How is educational continuity to be re-established?
4. What will become of the liberating arts?
5. Do we need a new philosophy of education within which to redesign our educational services and academic structures?

The second trend is TECHNOLOGY. Like the first, it has silently and rudely shattered our well-planned, encapsulated educational matrix. Yearly, technology is placing in students' hands ever more efficient means and increased supplies of materials to enable them to teach themselves. Through our present learning resources centers, students are empowered to learn at their own pace, in their own time, in their own interests.

While it is pointed out that even now university professors make little if any use of computer teaching and the wealth of audio-visual materials; that such centers are usually tucked away in some basement or corner suite on a campus and frequented by comparatively few; this is merely an indictment of the teaching profession and the lack of scholarly concern for the tremendous possibilities of the communications media. It is going to be impossible to turn our backs on the gifts and the power of teaching by technology. A Canadian expert in the field gives us the important reason:

> "Inevitably all new ideas await synthesis into established patterns. . . . . Obviously an era in which change explodes in our faces almost daily rather than being discharged gradually over many decades or even centuries, an era, that is, of electrified change, requires immediate synthesis. Assimilation cannot be delayed for a generation while the young are patiently instructed in a heritage which is itself undergoing visible convulsions. Young people are making it perfectly clear that it is impractical to wait for tomorrow's

daylight to illuminate today's spectre. Their unrest is understandable.

> "Two languages of change are available to us, both of them very powerful. One transmits data in motion. The other transmits the image in motion. One is the computer; the other, film, television and satellite. Before many years have passed, unheard of results will issue from the ungainly coupling of these two unparalleled language systems. . . . Both. . .are capable of generating immediate synthesis.[1]

It is at the community college level, in such situations as Orange Coast College, Golden West Community College[2] or Coast Community College[3] in California, pioneers in the electronics teaching field, that one may be initiated into the fantastic future for self-teaching. Another example of the electronics trend is described by Robert Carlisle in his article on Media, detailing the association of Goldmark Communications Corporation and six community colleges in a partnership for electronic teaching, the Association of Community Colleges for Excellence in Systems and Services (ACCESS).

"Serving more than 200,000 students, the ACCESS colleges are scattered across the continent: Central Piedmont in North Carolina; the Chicago City Colleges and The College of DuPage in Illinois; Metropolitan Community College in Kansas City, Missouri; Coast Community College in California; and Lane Community College in Oregon. Geographic dispersion may be something of a handicap, to be sure, but this and other liabilities are outweighed by the demonstrated achievements of the several ACCESS institutions. Chicago City's TV College, for example, celebrates its twentieth anniversary this September. Coast Community College put its own television station into service in 1972, has raised $750,000 for a televised anthropology course, and this fall inaugurates a "college beyond walls" ("Coastline") for an expected 22,000 students. The College of DuPage has several nationally visible computer projects under way."[4]

Those who have been exposed to this type of media teaching—where the best of art, scripting and performance are combined to make quality productions on film and videotape which inform and hold interest—attest to the boredom and frustration in the alternative traditional classroom lecture or seminar situation. Whether we like it or not, wish to use it or not, technology is here to stay in the teaching field as it is in the business and industrial field. It is only by close acquaintance with it, and the mastery of it, that we can make it a significant part of the educational enterprise.

Technology seems destined to change the environment and patterns of the teaching/learning situation:

1. When college/university electronics centers, public educational television stations and satellites, all put education over the airways, and commercial agencies distribute educational tapes and casettes, the "classroom" will be <u>anywhere</u>.

Questions:

1. If technology is able to provide a large part of the teaching task, how can educators

a. control the content and quality of what is taught?

b. be trained to use effectively the electronic resources?

2. How can the teacher-student relationship, believed to be of such vital importance in both the mental and personal maturing of youth, be re-instated in some new context, some new form? Is it necessary?

Since Mobility and Technology seem probables as waves of the future, will not educators be forced to rethink strategies of education, the role of the teacher, the student as learner?

Two Commitments

Two basic commitments, undergirding what is taught and how, characterize the U.S. educational enterprise.

The first is commitment to SECULAR EDUCATION. The Separation of Church and State (the separation of religion and education) has been considered from our founding days as essential to a free, pluralistic society.

The second commitment is to MASS EDUCATION with its recent corollary: THE DEVELOPMENT OF EACH PERSON TO HIS/HER FULL POTENTIAL. The carrying out of this total

commitment is now being considered essential to the welfare and progress of a genuinely democratic culture.

While in countries outside Western culture these two commitments may take, in some cases, centuries to be accepted and acted upon, it would seem inevitable that, in some form, such precepts will eventually be termed foundational for human development and social advance.

In the U.S. the Separation of Church and State with its result of severance of religion and education may be said to have been achieved. The liberties assured the citizenry under the Constitution with its capstone of the First Amendment has given the nation the most open academic forum in the world. This freedom has made possible the unhampered investigation of man and the Universe without fear of religious, social or political reprisals. It accounts for the phenomenal advances in science, technology, and all other fields.

With regard to the second commitment, at this point in the history of education we have only the faintest understanding of how the objective of providing each person with opportunities for "the development of his/her full potential" might be fostered. In practice, of course, this second commitment can never be said to be

fully "achieved," for there will always be more satisfactory ways of designing and implementing the educational experience. In ever-new educational terminology, however, this commitment to the person will probably remain a permanent educational lodestar.

While the separation of religion and education has endowed us with an academic arena of free inquiry and the much-vaunted attitude of "objectivity," it has also given us in higher education a vast "service station" of knowledge (to use Clark Kerr's trenchant simile), supposedly unencumbered with values. This might seem the best of worlds, but we have discovered (through research and observation, though didn't we always know it intuitively) that there is no such thing as "value-free education." Martin Trow has pointed out the variety of ways, both intended and unintended, by which colleges and universities influence students:

"1. There is the influence of the content of the curriculum—that is, what we teach in our formal course offerings;

2. There is the influence of how we teach —and especially of the conceptions we present or demonstrate of how we extend our understanding of our subjects, of

how we go about learning what we know;

3. There is the influence of the teacher as a person, both through the personal relationships with students and in his role as a model of the seeker of knowledge, for understanding, and for the truth (with a small "t").

"There are at least two other important forces through which colleges and universities shape the minds, sensibilities, and moral capacities of students. One is through the relations of students with one another—the influence, as we say, of the peer group or of especially significant members of it. The second is the influence of the institutions as political entities in the broadest sense: the consequences for students of how the college or university orders the relations among its members, of how it governs its own activities and its relations with its environment."[5]

In confronting the myth of value-free education, educational experts have become aware that when paramount value dimensions are purged from knowledge it leaves a

vacuum; that into this vacuum rushes a host of crassly materialistic, unworthy, and destructive "gods" that devastate a culture. We face daily in our society increasing violence, crime, escapist living, distrust and rebellion against every form of authority, mental illness and other aberrant forms of frustration and unhappiness. We see disenchantment with and aversion for education itself manifest in student crime, arson and burglaries in our school systems, estimated at costing us 600 million dollars in 1975.[6] While education cannot be indicted for all of our ills, we surmise that the lacks in our education may cause most of them.

We are being forced to the recognition that:

1. in purely materialistic teaching/learning, the wellsprings of education are too shallow;
2. deeper sources of understanding "knowledge" and "personality" need exploring.

Questions:

1. How might we rectify present lacks?
2. How should we delineate more broadly the tasks of education?

Possibly it might have been easier to address these matters and find solutions before the turbulent 60's. But now with the two trends indicated above bearing relentlessly down upon us, we are shorn of all frames of reference.

Compounding of our problem comes also at a time when education is under duress to assume almost the full role for guiding youth toward maturity. Up to the past few decades the Home, the Church, and the School were the three pillars on which society rested; they were considered as sharing equally in youth's development. But the home and the church are no longer major forces in the life of our young. We are in a cultural crisis in which the traditional institutions of society have broken down. At a time when education is faltering under grave financial restrictions, and attempting to adapt to the multiplicity of new instructional demands, it is asked to accept the additional burden of almost total responsibility for both the cognitive and affective development of youth.

But educators themselves created the objective of actualizing every person's full potential. They now face the hard truth that "full potential" is far more than heads and notebooks stuffed with facts, and

marketable professional and vocational skills. "Full potential" beds deep in the psyche and the emotional life, in the ability to cope with all aspects of existence, in the reserves of spirit that up to now have been termed "religious."

There is never any doubt that education has fulfilled and will continue to fulfill its responsibilities brilliantly in providing excellent professional and vocational skills that can fit persons for leadership and all subsidiary work roles in society no matter how radical or complex the demands. But even in this regard, rankings in surveys taken to identify success in professional and vocational fields show "skills" quite far down in the scale of listings, always superseded by such qualities as integrity, responsibility, dependability, good interpersonal relations, and the like. It is not so much the question of adequate skills, as adequate persons.

In The Future of Higher Education, Alexander Mood has written:

> "The most colossal failure of higher education is its persistence in ignoring personal development to focus entirely on intellectual matters. In a world becoming more highly organized and consequently more

dependent on social interaction, we must be ever more concerned about emotional maturity, personality development, and interpersonal skills. Persons without education of this kind will be unable to function effectively in a highly organized society which inevitably requires extensive interpersonal relations."[7]

In the same vein, Francis Horn has reminded us:

". . . .it is not enough just to develop one's intellectual powers. Brilliant and able minds are necessary to civilization; but by themselves they are not quite enough to save civilization and advance the welfare of mankind. For this the world needs men and women of virtue, dedication, and high moral integrity. There is little real hope for civilization unless, in addition to bringing greater knowledge into the affairs of men and of nations, we can establish higher standards of morality between individuals and between nations."[8]

One of the most startling and most disquieting statements to be made in the past few decades was uttered at the

close of his career in 1954 by the late Justice Robert Jackson, judge in the U.S. Supreme Court,[9] "Today we are in gravest danger from our best educated men."

The Future: Exhilarating Possibilities

The university was once dedicated to both intellectual and moral functions, heirs of Plato's belief that education is meant to develop wisdom and virtue. . . in today's semantics, perhaps, to develop the whole person. Even if higher education has temporarily been dazzled by materialistic demands and sterile advanced scholarship for its own sake instead of keeping persons steadily at the heart of the enterprise, it is free to change its objectives and methods.

At this crisis period in history when the disintegration of old cultural patterns and the making of new ones are in the balance, we are caught between "past perceptions which no longer work and new ones which have not become clear," to borrow a phrase from Max Lerner. But this cannot be an excuse. It is fair to say that we have the insights to create new educational patterns that can range the whole gamut of life, whether for the school, the home, the church, the institution or the occupation. There is much sound vision among scholars

today, much desire to experiment, much concern to put fragmented personality together again, to remedy the blunder of unwittingly educating zombies, not persons.

It is all available: the expertise, the motivation, the possibilities. But after the persons with foresight are identified, they must be backed by dedicated monies and permitted to engage in the type of experimentation and final implementation of their ideas which can blaze new trails. They must not be deserted in midstream because "the grant gave out and the experiment ended." We must see this rebuilding of our culture completely through. We must build it on broader and deeper concepts of the person and of knowledge. We must fashion it in totally new educational environments tailored to the future.

> ". . . .education, in a far from perfunctory sense, represents a society's considered departure from its past and its rendezvous with an uncertain and clouded future. The perpetuity and growth, the stagnation and decline, the dramatic eclipse or rebirth of a society and its people depend basically upon decisions about how and toward what ends members of that society will be educated."[10]

To higher education the gauntlet has been thrown down.

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